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# Curios and Relics

## Toys & Games

### Playing Cards

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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10  
Gentlemen:-

I have a deck of playing cards that has quite a history behind it, and as far as I know it is supposed to be the only deck left. If you could find any information about such a deck of cards that I will describe below I would appreciate hearing from you.

Abraham Lincoln, as history given us on these cards, had these cards made and issued them to his men during the Civil War.

I received them from a friend of mine, who had had them in his possession since before the Spanish-American War, and his family received them from a soldier, who was in Lincoln's Army, and he was supposed to have been issued these cards personally by Mr. Lincoln.

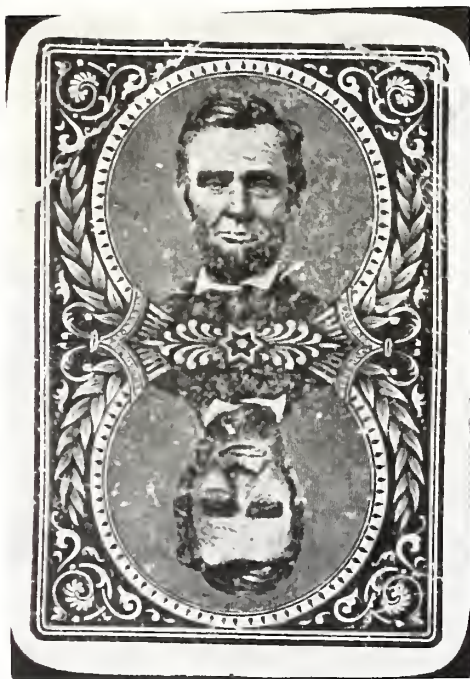
There are two pictures of Mr. Lincoln on the back side of each card - one picture on each half of the card. The front side of the card is harder to describe: In the upper left corner and lower right corner is a picture containing the suit and value of the card. Ex - The Jack of Spades has a picture of a Jack and a Spade in that corner. The ten of Spades has a picture of ten spades in those corners. In the center of the card is the emblem of one of the Corps of the Army - Ex - The 1st. Army Corps emblem was a circle with a one in the middle and around the outside it has 1st Army Corps. Behind the emblem are two flags, one is a solid blue and the other is a U. S. Flag. In the upper right corner is listed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Division and in the lower left corner is a list of the Commanders of that Corps. Example - Commanders: John C. Fremont, Irvin McDowell, Winfield S. Hancock, John F. Reynolds and John Newton of the 1st Army Corps. The Spades and Clubs list the 1st thru the 25th Army Corps and one of the Cavalry Corps, and this is duplicated by the Hearts and Diamonds. This is as thorough description of the cards as I can give you but if you have any information on the issual of such a deck of cards and need a more accurate description of them to identify them, I will have a photostatic copy of the front and back of one of the cards made to help you. These cards are referred to as the "Grand Army Deck".

Thanking you for any information you can give me regarding the above cards and any information you can give me will be appreciated, I am,

Yours respectfully,

G. V. Wilson,  
3230 Emerson St.,  
Fort Worth 5, Texas.





March 16, 1953

Mr. G. V. Wilson  
3230 Emerson Street  
Fort Worth 5, Texas

My dear Mr. Wilson:

Back at my office again I have done a little work on the playing cards with which you kindly provided me photostats illustrating one of them. The size of the blue field and the American flag the stars continues on as they are arranged in the part we can see I would think there were perhaps 39 stars in the flag which would mean about the period that North Dakota came in to the Union in 1889. However, this is not of course proof that can be relied upon. Outside of this I do not think I have any other suggestion that might help you.

Very truly yours,

LAW:PE

Director

April 17, 1957

Mr. G. V. Wilson  
3230 Emerson Street  
Fort Worth 5, Texas

Dear Mr. Wilson:

In March of 1953 you addressed a letter to The Lincoln National Life Foundation regarding a deck of playing cards which you have in your possession. You described these playing cards as having a picture of Abraham Lincoln on the back of each card and some corp. insignia on the face of each card listing the names of certain union commanders.

Since I have become the Director of The Lincoln National Life Foundation, I have been reading quite a lot of correspondence that Dr. Louis A. Warren conducted in regard to relics such as you possess.

I am wondering if you are interested in selling this deck of cards. It would make a very nice exhibit item for us and if you do offer it for sale we would like very much to know what price you are asking for it.

Hoping to hear from you, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Director

Dr. R. G. McMurtry:bb

# new product announcement

From: Claire Schonfeld  
U. S. Games Systems, Inc.  
468 Park Avenue South  
New York, N. Y. 10016  
(212) 685-4300

August, 1974

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Photos enclosed)

## NEW BICENTENNIAL GAME -- HISTORICAL PLAYING CARD DECK

NEW YORK, N. Y. -- U. S. Games Systems, leading manufacturer of popular tarot decks, books and games, is introducing a new set of playing cards designed expressly to tie in with the U. S. Bicentennial.

The American Bicentennial Historical Playing Card Deck is a complete deck of handsome oversized playing cards depicting important figures in America's history. The full color deck is attractively gift packaged with a 160-page book by Stuart R. Kaplan containing biographical sketches of each of the persons featured on the cards. The book also carries instructions for eight early-type American games based upon rules played since Colonial times.

The Bicentennial deck is divided into four historic suits: Colonial (spades), Federal (clubs), Civil War (diamonds) and Frontier (hearts). Each suit features personalities popular during the period.

Paintings on the cards were commissioned from Douglas Gorsline, a noted illustrator of historic American subjects. In full color and meticulously detailed, the mini-portraits are expressive and lifelike, and tell something about each subject. These include, for example: George Washington, king of spades; Paul Revere, seven of diamonds; Dolly Madison, queen of clubs; and Davy Crockett, four of hearts.

The cards are a unique educational tool for children and teenagers, but they are equally appropriate as a coffee-table gift item. Young and old alike will enjoy playing old American games with this historic deck illustrating America's priceless heritage.

The American Bicentennial Historical Playing Card Deck has a suggested retail of \$6.00.



**U. S. GAMES SYSTEMS, Inc.**

468 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 • (212) 685-4300





# U.S. GAMES SYSTEMS, Inc.

468 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016

August 30, 1974

Lincoln National Life Foundation  
Lincoln Library Museum  
1301 S. Harrison St.  
Fort Wayne, Ind. 46802

Att: Gift Shop

Gentlemen:

We have recently produced The American Bicentennial Historical Playing Card Deck, which we feel would sell very well if put on display in your gift shop.

The Bicentennial Deck consists of 54-cards depicting important figures in America's history. It also includes a 160-page history book describing each person listed. On pages 82 & 83 of the history book, there is a complete description of Abe Lincoln.

Please find enclosed xerox of above listed pages, new product information flyer, sample cards taken from the deck, color illustration and xerox of unsolicited letter we received from the Regional Director of the San Francisco American Revolution Bicentennial Administration. We are also enclosing our full color 24-page catalog and wholesale price list as we have many products which are ideally suited for museum gift shops.

Your cost for the Bicentennial Deck would be \$36/dz. Suggested retail \$6.00 each. F.O.B. our warehouse New York City on orders under \$350.00 cost. Terms 2% 10 days net 30.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

U. S. GAMES SYSTEMS, INC.

Claire Schonfeld  
Sales Manager

CS:se  
enc.

## Civil War Suit (King)

### Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

The sixteenth president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in Hardin, Kentucky, on February 12, 1809. The Lincoln family moved to Indiana where life proved very hard and Lincoln's education was mostly self-taught. In 1831, at the age of twenty-two, Lincoln moved to southern Illinois where he practiced surveying and served as postmaster at New Salem while studying law. In 1836 Lincoln was admitted to the bar and the following year he moved to Springfield, quickly gaining a reputation as an outstanding jury lawyer. With a partner he opened a store which soon failed and it took Lincoln several years to pay off the debts, earning him the nickname "Honest Abe."

Lincoln served as a Whig legislator from 1834 to 1842 and he was elected to Congress in 1846. He joined the Republican Party and ran for the Senate in 1858 against Stephen A. Douglas, declaring in his nomination acceptance speech, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Lincoln won the Republican nomination for the presidency in 1860 as a compromise candidate of his party. His election victory made secession inevitable and by February 1861





INTRODUCING...

**AB76 THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL HISTORICAL PLAYING CARD DECK**  
in Celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of our Nation.



- ★ For the first time a series of fifty-two magnificent paintings by commissioned artist Douglas Gorsline are reproduced in oversize playing cards depicting people who contributed their own greatness to the history and development of the United States.
- ★ The American Bicentennial Deck is divided into four suits:
  - Colonial Suit (spades)
  - Federal Suit (clubs)
  - Civil War Suit (diamonds)
  - Frontier Suit (hearts)
- ★ Each life-like figure is portrayed in painstaking detail and stark reality.
- ★ A Uniquely Appropriate Gift in Honor of America's Bicentennial Celebration.
- ★ A Collector's Item of Everlasting Value For the Entire Family.
- ★ The colorful cards of the American Bicentennial Deck recapture the excitement and drama of America's rich heritage.
- ★ The 160-page book accompanying the American Bicentennial Deck contains a biographical sketch of the persons featured on each card who left an indelible imprint on our past.
- ★ Widely acclaimed and recommended by leading educators, historians, art critics and teachers.
- ★ Added feature — complete rules for eight different family games.
- ★ Individually custom designed logo available to suit your requirements.
- ★ Available for Civic Groups and Bicentennial Organizations.
- ★ Ideal Gift Item for Business and Marketing Programs.

— For Further Details Contact —

U. S. GAMES SYSTEMS, INC. • 468 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016

The following is an unsolicited letter recently received about the new American Bicentennial Playing Card Deck.

American Revolution  
Bicentennial Administration  
One Embarcadero Center  
San Francisco, California 94111  
(415) 556-1976



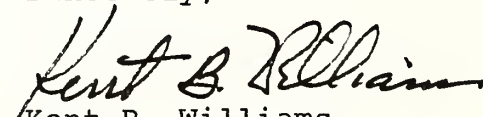
Ms. Claire Schonfeld  
Sales Manager  
U.S. Games Systems, Inc.  
468 Park Avenue South  
New York, New York 10016

Dear Ms. Schonfeld:

As I am sure you are aware that the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration has barred itself from endorsement of any commercial products. Nonetheless, I feel obligated to say that I find your Bicentennial Playing Card Deck in excellent taste.

U.S. Games Systems, Inc., is to be congratulated for a worthy addition to those products calling attention to the 200th Anniversary.

Sincerely,

  
Kent B. Williams  
Regional Director



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## AB76 THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL HISTORICAL PLAYING CARD DECK

Complete fifty-two-card deck plus two jokers depict important historical figures in America's history. For the first time a series of fifty-two magnificent paintings by commissioned artist Douglas Gorsline are reproduced in oversize playing cards depicting people who contributed their own greatness to the history and development of the United States.

The American Bicentennial Deck is divided into four suits: Colonial Suit (spades), Federal Suit (clubs), Civil War Suit (diamonds) and Frontier Suit (hearts). Each life-like figure is portrayed in painstaking detail and stark reality.

The 160-page book accompanying the American Bicentennial Deck contains a biographical sketch of the persons featured on each card from colonial times to the frontier period.

Widely acclaimed and recommended by leading educators, historians, art critics and teachers, the American Bicentennial Deck is a unique collector's item of everlasting value for the entire family.

Added feature—includes rules for eight different family games. Collector's deluxe edition. Individually shrink wrapped.

## POKER DECKS

PK18  
CLOVER  
(Regular Face)

PK40  
MONKEYS  
(Regular Face)



PK818G  
STAR  
(Giant Face)

PK505  
SCROLL  
(Regular Face)

PK510  
ORNAMENT  
(Regular Face)

## POKER DECKS

Deluxe plastic-coated poker playing cards by Heraclio Fournier of Spain. Available in red or blue backs.

Mrs. B. A. Fraass  
1331 Bonnie Doone Ter.  
Corona Del Mar, CA 92625

September 1, 1993

Dear Mr. Sanders,

When my husband and I visited the Memorial last May, we had a conversation with you about a deck of playing cards that belonged to my Grandfather.

I have enclosed copies, including a copy of the brown embossed leather case. Names on the hearts are duplicates of ones on spades, and clubs are duplicates of diamonds. The backs (of Lincoln) are blue and white.

At your suggestion, I wrote to Mr. Dan Weinburg in Chicago and sent copies, but I have not yet heard from him.

I hope the enclosed will be of interest to you.

Sincerely,  
Joanne Fraass





*File  
in press*

*The Lincoln Museum  
1800 South Clinton Street P.O. Box 1110  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801  
219 455 8864  
Part of Lincoln National Corporation*

December 15, 1993

Mr. Gerald W. Sanders  
Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial  
Lincoln City, IN 47552

Dear Jerry,

Enclosed are news articles I do not think I sent to you. They are about the new director and historian.

The photocopies you sent me quite a long time ago just surfaced. We have Civil War cards in the collection but not like the ones your visitor, Mrs. Joanne Fraass of Corona Del Mar, CA. has. The backs of the cards appear to be more 20th century. However, a person would need to see and feel the paper before anything could be determined.

I hope all is well with you and yours. Have a Happy Holiday and the Best New Year.

Sincerely,

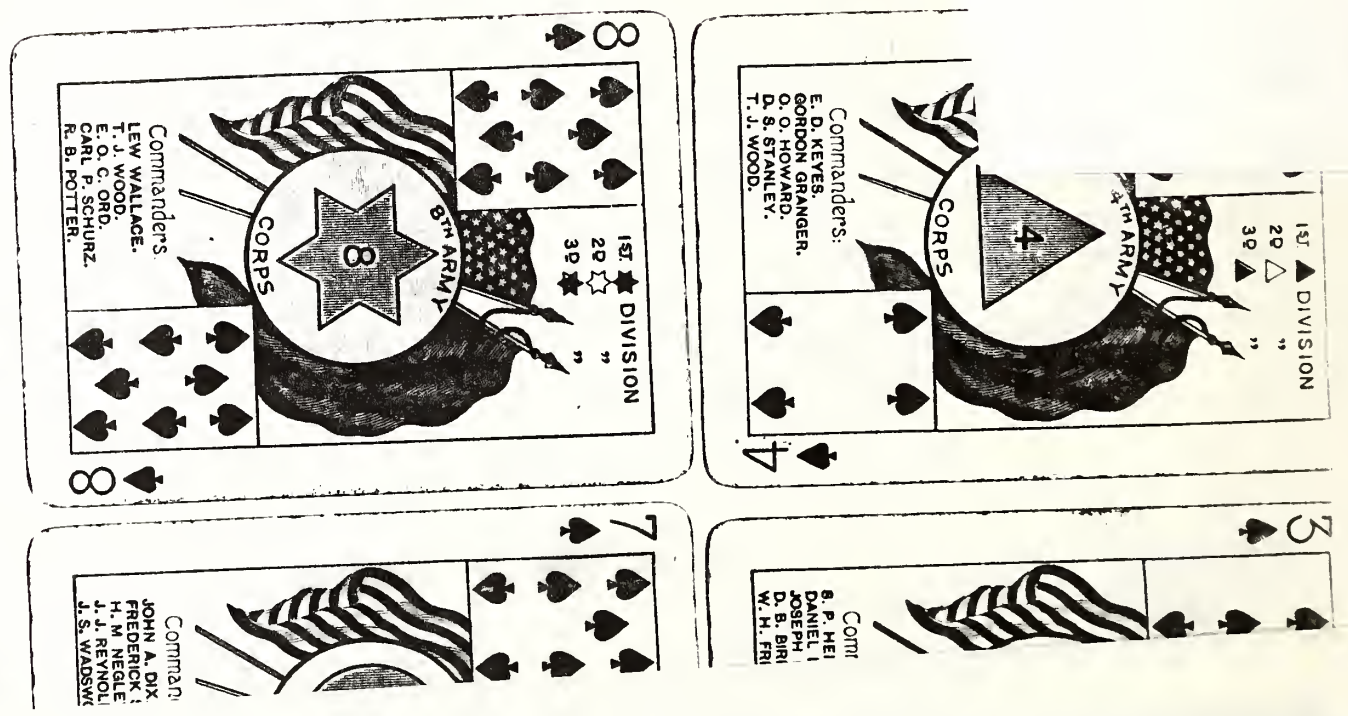
*Ruth*  
Ruth E. Cook  
Assistant to the Director

*Joan L. Flinspach  
Director*

landscape  
if necessary

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Shop All in Hall!

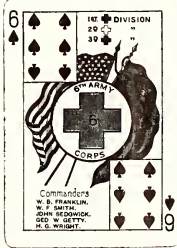
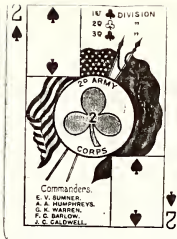
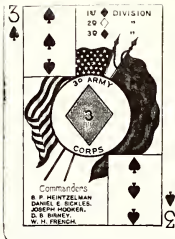
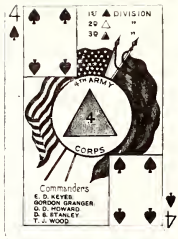




Ruth  
Know Anything  
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CARDS? If  
do let me  
know

Jerry Sander  
Interesting  
Item!

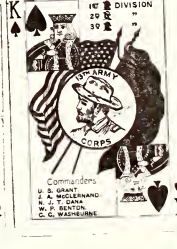
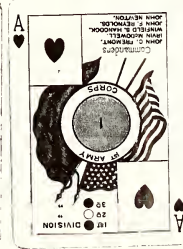
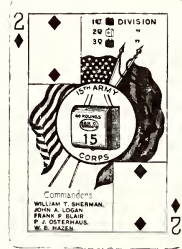
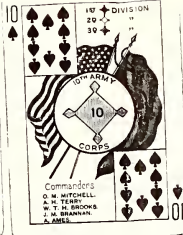
See copy of  
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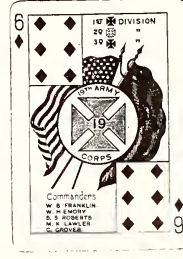
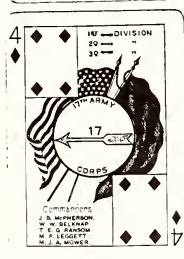
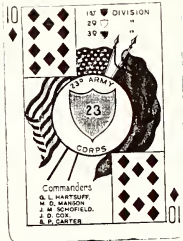
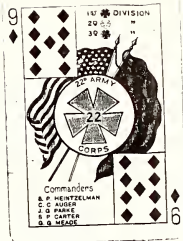
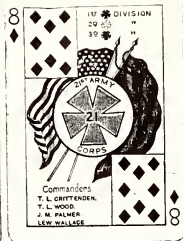


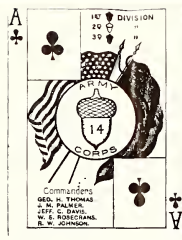
Hope All is well!

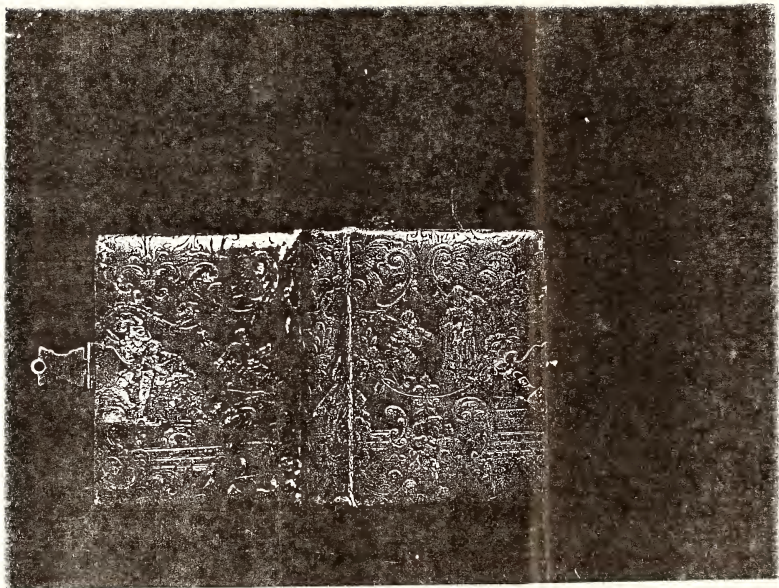
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